

CHARTER FOR THE UPPER MISSOURI RIVER RESERVOIR SYSTEM FISHERIES CITIZEN WORKGROUP

Revised January 7, 2009

The Upper Missouri River Reservoirs and associated river fisheries are some of the most heavily fished waters in Montana accounting for roughly 15 percent of the total annual statewide angling pressure.

Because of the system's proximity to Bozeman, Great Falls, Butte, Missoula and Helena, recreational use of the reservoirs will continue to grow as the fisheries become even more integral to the quality of life for those who live and recreate in Lewis and Clark and Broadwater counties.

The current fisheries management plan (Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan 2000-2009) established a common goal that the “three-reservoir system should be managed as a high quality, cost effective, multi species fishery with high levels of angler satisfaction.”

The current plan will expire December 31, 2009.

It is the goal of this management planning process to have the new fisheries management plan in place by December 2009.

Interests to be Represented on the Citizen Workgroup

- Unaffiliated warmwater anglers
- Unaffiliated coldwater anglers
- Organized warmwater-angler groups
- Organized coldwater-angler groups
- Ice-fishing anglers
- Conservation groups
- Kids' fishing
- Fishing-tournament organizer
- Landowner
- Outfitter
- Local government
- Local business
- Other interests

Role of the Workgroup

The Workgroup will:

- Develop Upper Missouri River Reservoir system fisheries management alternatives for consideration by FWP. Alternatives must conform to the joint Goals and Guidelines developed by FWP.

- Provide information and input needed for FWP to make informed selections among the alternatives.
- Forward alternatives to FWP for incorporation into the management plan and attend public open-house meetings to help explain alternatives.

Responsibilities of the Workgroup Members

The Workgroup:

- Is a cooperative effort, with all members participating in formulating each alternative?
- Is not charged with developing consensus on one preferred alternative?
- Members acknowledge the value of each advisors comments and viewpoint— individuals will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- Members agree to bring information into the process and likewise, to communicate to constituents about the process as it goes forward.
- Functions in an advisory capacity aligned with state law and policies, and does not have decision-making authority.
- Members will be required to attend every meeting; substitutes or proxies will not be allowed.

Responsibilities of Resource Specialist Group

- The Resource Specialist Group will provide biological, social and hydrological information on all aspects of the upper Missouri River reservoir system fisheries; biologists will bring in other technical representatives to add information to the process when needed.
- FWP fisheries biologists and managers will provide fisheries management expertise, background on past management and management constraints.
- FWP plan coordinators will ensure that the process is timely and effective. FWP plan coordinators will:
 - serve as general information source;
 - serve as workgroup members regarding any special needs or requests;
 - organize meetings and provide written meeting summaries in cooperation with facilitator;
 - organize guest speakers or topic specific experts to present information to the workgroup;
 - write drafts of plan chapters and alternatives;
 - conduct optional working and subcommittee meetings;
 - manage review of plan chapters;
 - compile the final draft plan;
 - coordinate the public involvement process after the draft is released to the general public.

Meetings

- Timing of Meetings
Meetings will be held monthly from January through June or July. If more or fewer meetings are required, adjustments will be made via general agreement among members. Meetings will be all-day, held on weekdays and/or weekends. Optional working subcommittee meetings may be required to complete the plan. FWP will schedule the first meeting; the workgroup will set subsequent meetings. FWP will provide mileage and per diem at state rates for workgroup members.

- Location of Meetings
Meetings will typically be held in Helena at the Montana Association of Counties Building (MACo).
- Role of the Facilitator
The facilitator will:
 - conduct the monthly meetings in a positive and inclusive manner.
 - help develop agreement among workgroup members on ground rules for member conduct and meeting operation.
 - help the workgroup address items on each meeting agenda in a timely fashion.
 - ensure participation by advisors is equitable and courteous.
 - assist in producing a written summary of the major points for each meeting.
 - help the workgroup identify issues and develop effective fisheries management alternatives.

Timeline

The process will result in recommendations/alternatives presented to FWP in June 2009. FWP will prepare a draft plan that will be released for 30-60 days of public review. After another revision, the FWP Director will consider the plan and select an alternative. FWP will adopt and release the final plan upon the December 2009 decision.

TIMELINE FOR THE UPPER MISSOURI RIVER RESERVOIR/TAILWATER SYSTEM FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

DATE	ACTIVITY
October - November 2008	FWP publicizes process. Solicits nominations for citizen workgroup; FWP briefs Broadwater and Lewis and Clark County Commissioners and federal agencies on the process.
October 2008	Outline of planning process and workgroup application published on FWP website. Applications also mailed to interests.
November 2008	Resource Specialist Group convenes and identifies data summary needs.
November - December 2008	Workgroup applications received and considered.
January 2009	Workgroup members selected and first meeting held. First meeting focuses on introductions, background, goals and process.
February 2009	Monthly meeting focuses on biology of the system. Comments discussed on draft chapter of plan dealing with background, goals and process.
March 2009	Monthly meeting focuses on fisheries management alternatives. Comments discussed on draft chapter of plan dealing with biology of system.
April 2009	Monthly meeting continues to focus on fisheries management alternatives. Previous material discussed.
May 2009	Monthly meeting continues to focus on fisheries management alternatives. Previous material discussed.
June 2009	Monthly meeting addresses final discussion of fisheries management alternatives. Alternatives drafted and submitted to Resource Specialist Group.
July - August 2009	Draft Plan released for public review. Open houses held
September 2009	Public review completed and revisions made to draft plan.
October - November 2009	Final draft plan completed and submitted to FWP Director.
December 2009	Final decision by FWP Director. Final Plan approved and put in place by FWP Director FWP Commission.